

REMARKS

Reconsideration and further prosecution of the above-identified application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and the discussion that follows. Claims 1-27 are pending in this application. Claim 1-27 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. Pub. No. 2004/0088206 to Thompson et al. ("Thompson"). Claims 1 and 12 have been amended. After a careful review of the claims, it is believed that the claims are in allowable form and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-27 have been rejected as anticipated by Thompson which describes a work allocation system in which computer programs, referred to as mediation agents 28, 29, allocate work to workgroups by bidding for work. However, these computer "mediation agents" that receive the work project information and make the bid are not the actual human agents; Rather, the computer module (i.e. mediator agents) makes the bids, and receives the assignment. The independent claims 1, and 12 have been amended to clarify that human agents make bids in the claimed methods and apparatus.

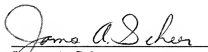
Claim 1 and 12 are distinguishable over Thompson because Thompson does not teach providing a description of the call to a human agent, nor does it teach receiving a bid from a human agent as claimed. With regard to claims 22, 26 and 27, Thompson does not display the description of the call as claimed but merely delivers data to the computer mediator agent module in Thompson which does not use a display. The cited description on page 3, para 45-47 merely describes the computer mediation module determining whether it can handle the work, but does not describe human agents. Similarly, the cited passage on page 6, para. 107 merely describes the OSS software module acceptance of bids from the mediator software based on price. Therefore, all independent claims 1, 12, 22, 26 and 27 are believed to distinguish over

Thompson. In addition, dependent claims 2-11, 13-21, and 23-25 are believed to be similarly distinguishable because they are dependent upon allowable independent claims 1, 12 and 22.

With regard to claims 3, 10, 14, 21 and 24, Thompson describes accepting bids based on price (see p. 6, para 107) but does not describe rejecting bids based on other criteria such as minimum skill level (Claim 3, 14, 24) or the agents determined average (Claims 10, 21). Thus, claims 3, 12, 14, 21 and 24 have believed to be further distinguishable for this reason.

As discussed above, claims 1-27 are believed to be allowable over the cited reference. Therefore, allowance of all pending claims 1-27 is believed to be in order and such action is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of the subject application, he is respectfully requested to telephone applicant's undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,


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